

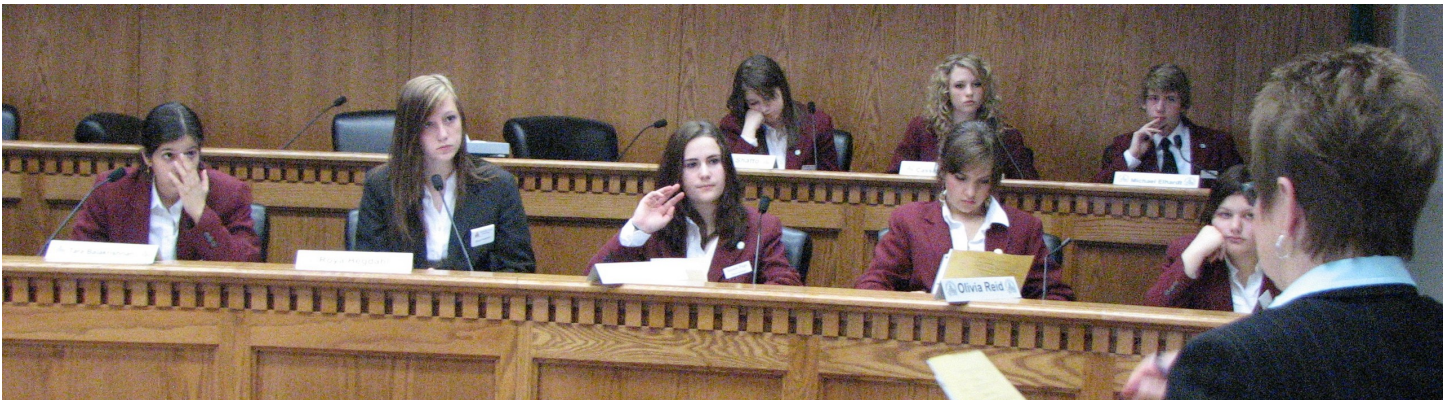


The Weekly Page

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Pages Learn About Legislature



Big ideas in government

Throughout the week pages grappled with understanding the three “big ideas” for a representative government: **governing society is a complex process, successful democracies rely on responsible citizens, and government affects our life every day.** As they participated in daily discussions, listened to guest speakers, and proposed bills in mock committee hearings, their understanding around the concepts deepened. On Friday, they wrote about one of the big ideas to demonstrate the depth of their new knowledge.

Mock committees debate bills



Pages worked individually or in small groups to research and write bills designed to address issues which were relevant to them and the state. They had their choice of working up a social bill or a fiscal bill to present in a mock committee hearing on

Thursday. Students spent a day either researching social problems or playing the “Ax and Tax” budget game to get information for constructing their bills. They used class templates to transfer the information and their proposed solutions to a very

real-looking House or Senate bill. Pages read their bills and “committee members,” governed by the rules of parliamentary procedure, debated the pros and cons of the proposals. A “DO PASS” or “DO NOT PASS” recommendation was then voted upon, allowing a bill to continue on in the legislative process. As in the real political system, some bills died in committee

Children need protection from second-hand smoke

Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives Alisha McCue and Annie Caldwell introduced House Bill 3672, which addresses the issue of smoking while driving with children in the car. “The bill is a good one because it will protect minors from being affected by secondhand smoke,” said Rep.

McCue. The bill will ban smoking in the car when minors are present and will start out as a secondary offense for the first year, and then it will become a primary law. Secondhand smoke is toxic and can cause lung disease, heart disease, asthma and ear infections. “Inhaling the small particles in smoke can also adversely affect the development of children’s lungs, and there is nothing the child can do to protect himself,” said Rep. Caldwell. Violators of the law will be fined \$100-200, depending on the number of minors in the car. If more than one adult in the car is smoking, each adult will receive a ticket.



Sack the plastic bags



Olympia – Senate Bill 5301 was introduced yesterday by Representative Rose Wilhelmi and Senator Mitchell Mills. “This bill ad-

resses the issue of plastic bag pollution and will give a \$500 tax credit to any retail store that eliminates the use of plastic bags by October 1, 2009,” said Rep. Wilhelmi. Each year Americans use between 30 and 100 billion plastic bags—enough to encircle the planet at least 31 times. Plastic bags are manufactured using over 12 million barrels of oil, and only a fraction of them make it to the recycling bin. Plastic bags can take a thousand years to decompose and can clog landfills and litter the oceans, killing untold thousands of sea turtles and other animals every year.

Reps crack down on puppy mills

Olympia – House Bill 2323 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Caitlin Jirovsky and Denaya Blacklock. “This bill addresses the issue of dog breeding facilities and will protect these animals’ rights,” said Rep.



Jirovsky. The bill includes new regulations regarding the number of unneutered or spayed animals a breeder may keep. The recent raid of a breeding facility in Seattle prompted this legislation. Authorities found more than 600 dogs and puppies



crammed into filthy cages without adequate food, water or veterinary care. More than 80 percent of the adult dogs were pregnant, placing an enormous burden on the state’s animal care community. This bill

will help to regulate the conditions in which the dogs are living.

Sleepy teens get later school start

Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Kayla Howder and Cassie Howder introduced Senate Bill 6999, which addresses the issue of school starting times. “The bill is a good one because it will allow students to get more sleep so they can perform better in high school,” said Sen.



Kayla Howder. The bill requires all public high schools to start later no earlier than 8:45 a.m. to allow students to get more sleep and be more successful academically. “Students need 9 hours of sleep to perform their best and are only getting an average of 7.5 hours of sleep or less,” said Sen. Cassie Howder.

House allows gay marriage

Olympia – House Bill 1412 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Taylor Brown and Laura Wilson. “This bill addresses the issue of gay marriage and will ensure



the personal rights of all people by permitting same-sex marriages,” said Rep. Brown. Currently committed partners are at a disadvantage without a legal marriage license. For example, when a same-sex partner becomes ill and is admitted into a hospital, the other partner is not able to see him or her. This law will allow a legal marriage contract between same sex couples. “We are not trying to tell churches what to do,” said Rep. Wilson. “This law will not prevent churches from denying marriage ceremonies to same sex couples, but no county courthouse may deny a marriage license to same-sex couples,” she said.

Death or debt?



Olympia – Senate Bill 5663 was introduced yesterday by Senators Tara Balakrishnan, Anna Borden, and Taylor Talcott. “This bill addresses the newly enacted law allowing physician-assisted suicide and will add amendments to safeguard human life,” said Sen. Balakrishnan. In order to limit the number of lethal drug assisted deaths, the legislature will change Initiative-1000 to require an extension of the first waiting period by 15 days, making it 30 days total; and the second by another 48 hours, making it four days total. Also a doctor must add the administration of lethal drugs to the list of underlying causes of death on the death certificate.

Legislature outlaws plastic bags by 2010



Olympia – House Bill 2408 was introduced yesterday by Senator Roya Hegdahl. “This bill addresses the issue of plastic bags and will reduce the immense amount of plastic our country throws away each year,” said Rep. Hegdahl. According to recent estimates, Americans use about 100 billion plastic bags a year, which is equal to 12 million barrels of oil. “Although plastic bag recycling is available, it is not usually easily accessible. Thus, only about 5.2 percent of bags used each year are recycled,” she said. The bill being passed would help reduce the escalating problem with plastic and its toll on the environment by requiring all stores to stop providing plastic bags for shoppers by 2010.

Abortion restrictions save money and lives

Olympia – Yesterday, Senator Luke Klein introduced Senate Bill 5992, which addresses the issue of abortion restrictions. “The bill is a good one because it would reduce state government funding for abortions,” said Sen. Klein. In order to limit abortions performed on minors in Washington State, the Legislature will require parental notification for women under 18 if this bill becomes law.



Fair and balanced science education needed



Olympia – House Bill 3999 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Rachel Askew and Rachel Kinkela and Senator Andrew Jenkins. “This bill addresses the issue of public school science education and will provide a balanced science education for the students of the State of Washington,” said Sen. Jenkins. This bill will allow other theories that explain the origin of the earth and life to be taught in science classes and will require science teachers to teach both the strengths and weaknesses of each theory. “Hearing the pros and cons of the scientific ideas will allow students to choose for themselves which theory they believe,” said Sen. Jenkins.

1-2-3...Go!



Olympia – House Bill 1999 was introduced yesterday by Representative Elizabeth Pratt. “This bill addresses the issue of improving math scores in public schools and will enable more students to pass the math section of the WASL and graduate by 2013,” said Rep. Pratt. This bill establishes a committee to research and find the three most successful math programs in the nation and requires schools to choose one of them if they wish to receive state funding for their math curriculum. Currently only about half of Washington's 10 graders are passing the math section of the WASL each year. “This will definitely help our students get better jobs in the high-demand fields that require math skills,” said Rep. Pratt.

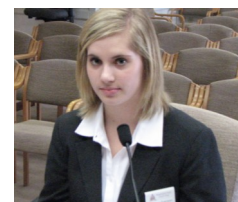
Steroid testing advocated by Senate

Olympia – Senate Bill 6969 was introduced yesterday by Senators Erik Kundu and Michael Elhardt. “This bill addresses the issue of steroid use by high school athletes and will prevent serious health problems on our school teams,” said Sen. Elhardt. The Legislature will provide an annual fund of \$50,000 to be used for testing in high school athletic programs. This funding will continue until 2015 when the effectiveness of the law will be evaluated. Students who get caught using steroids will be banned from all athletic participation for the rest of their high school career.



Wake up, sleepy heads!

Olympia – House Bill 1035 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Elizabeth Thrasher and Chelsea Franson. “This bill addresses the issue of school starting times and will ensure healthy and academically successful students,” said Rep. Franson. Teens all around the state are waking up between 5 and 6 a.m. to go to school. Research has proved that teens are wired to stay up late and sleep in late. Over time, sleep deprivation leads to serious consequences for academic achievement. “This bill will push back the high school starting times to 8:30 a.m.—a schedule more in tune with an adolescent’s biological wake and sleep patterns,” said Rep. Thrasher.



House budget includes cuts and taxes

Olympia—Yesterday Representatives Krista Lindsay, Jessica Gamble and Hannah Ganzfried met with the House Ways and Means Committee to pound out hard solutions to a serious budget shortfall predicted for the next biennium. The representatives were equally in favor of both taxes and cuts to help balance the budget. Items slated for taxation included cigarettes and soft drinks. “For the hard-core addicts who don’t mind the extra fifty cents, this

proposal will benefit the budget,” said Rep. Gamble. “This action could also encourage people to stop smoking in order to save themselves money, so it could help the state in the long run with health care costs,” said Rep. Ganzfried. The tax on soda would be 5 cents per can. Both representatives also agreed that the Governor and the Lt. Governor could have their bodyguard expenses cut by 50 percent to save money. “There have been no recorded attacks on these officials so far. They would still have coverage, so it’s not like we’re leaving them unattended,” said Rep. Ganzfried. Rep. Lindsay was in favor of cutting spending on goods and services by 25 percent and in keeping the money in the budget for reducing class size in public schools. “These reductions, on average, lower the classroom size by only one or two students,” she said. “This would not impact the teachers’ ability to teach and help other students. The measure would save \$140 million.” Her other idea to raise lost revenue included raising the sales tax by .5 percent. This would result in \$999 million. “The raise is very modest and would not stop resident from spending at all. For example, a \$100 purchase would be



raised by only 50 cents.” The current economic forecast predicts over \$9 billion in lost revenue for the next biennium. “We are going to have to tighten our belts and suffer some uncomfortable situations until we fix this problems,” said Rep. Ganzfried.

Rep. Duffield clears the air

Olympia – Yesterday, Representative Kelsea Duffield introduced House Bill 3479, which addresses the issue of secondhand smoke. “The bill is a good one because it prevents possible future health problems in our children,” said Rep. Duffield. This bill will be a secondary offense and have a \$100 fine. California and Arkansas already have such a band in place. Wash-

ington State already has a law prohibiting foster parents from smoking while a child is in the car. Secondhand smoke is toxic, and passengers in a vehicle cannot escape exposure. Secondhand smoke is associated with lung disease, heart disease, asthma, and ear infections and can lead to an increased risk of sudden infant death syndrome. “This is a classic public health issue. It is an opportunity to help children and would also lead to economic savings by preventing increased health care spending on individuals exposed to secondhand smoke as children. This may also give a nudge to help people quit smoking,” said Rep. Duffield.

Behind the wheel at 14?

Olympia – House Bill 1212 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Sarah Arpin and Kendall Fenske. “This bill addresses the issue of age requirements for driver’s learning permits and will reduce accidents caused by young teen drivers,” said Rep. Fenske. If this bill becomes law, the age at which one can obtain a driver’s permit and attend driver’s training classes will be lowered to 14. The point of this bill is to reduce accidents caused by young teen drivers by giving them an extra year of experience training with licensed drivers.



Senators kill death penalty



Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Emma Newmark, Molly Shatto, and Olivia Reid introduced Senate Bill 5923, which addresses the issue

of the state’s death penalty sentence. “The bill is a good one because it stops the inhumane practice of this cruel punishment and saves money,” said Sen. Reid. This bill abolishes the death penalty. In Washington there are two different methods of execution, hanging and lethal injection. Death penalty trials are expensive, costing an average of 48 percent more than the average trials in which the prosecutors seek life imprisonment. Lethal injection consists of three shots. “If one of those fails to work, then the prisoner will feel as if his veins are on fire but he won’t be able to say anything,” said Sen. Newmark. This new law will make the punishment for the state’s highest crime be life in prison without the chance of parole.

Credit card companies curtailed on college campuses



Olympia – Senate Bill 7776 was introduced yesterday by Senators Henry Walker and Jonathan Lewis. “This bill addresses the issue of marketing credit cards to college students and will help them stay out of debt,” said Sen. Walker. If this bill

becomes law, no credit card company will be allowed to solicit customers on campus. “These companies are aggressively targeting college students who are naïve about money matters and vulnerable to predatory offers that can get them permanently mired in debt,” said Sen. Lewis.

Dropout plan involves bilingual educators

Olympia – House Bill 1995 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Guadalupe Reynaga and Angelica Gonzalez. “This bill addresses the issue of high school dropouts and will hire adult advocates and more bilingual teachers,” said Rep. Reynaga. Many high school students are struggling in school because of the language they speak. “When English is not a person’s first language, it can be hard to understand the homework or get help from parents, so it is important that they get the help at school that they need,” said Rep. Gonzalez. “It is important to have students graduate since researches shows that high school education is the minimum to compete in today’s global economy.”



Guest speakers visit Page School

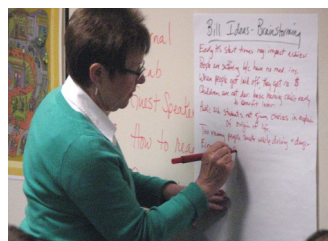


Code Reviser Kyle Theissen and lobbyists Maria Chiechi and Lori Bielinski joined the pages during classes on Wednesday. The speakers talked about what led them to their current positions and shared insightful information about their jobs and the issues they are currently working on. Pages were able to interact with these guests by asking questions and sharing their own views in response to the speaker’s questions.



Teachers passionate about civic education

The Washington State Legislature’s 2009 Page School employs teachers Judi Orr, a certificated teacher, and Matt Kreiling, former Legislative intern and lobbyist. Judi is a retired social studies and English teacher who taught for over 35 years in the Clover Park School District, and Matt lobbied for the Washington Student Lobby representing college students throughout Washington. “I really enjoy facilitating learning and watching those light bulbs go off each week,” said Matt, as he introduced himself on Monday. Both teachers enjoyed meeting so many students from all parts of Washington and teaching them more about how state government functions. “I’d be a committee ‘junkie’ if I wasn’t teaching each day. Watching citizens testify about various issues alongside experts in the field is just fascinating to me,”



said Judi.

Opposite house cut-off week brings bill process close to an end

Today at 5 p.m. marked the deadline for all bills, other than those concerning the budget and matters necessary to implement the budget, to be voted off the floor in the opposite house as they continued through the lawmaking process. Pages got a first-hand look at how parliamentary procedure is used by legislators on the floor of each chamber as they delivered documents, listened to their legislators express their views and watched the voting process. Bills which are passed in their final form will be sent to the Governor for her signature by the session’s end on April 26.

Competitive edge results in *Jeopardy* win

On Friday pages tested their knowledge of the Legislative process in a spirited game of *Jeopardy*. Winning teams were comprised of individuals who had learned the most during their week in Page School and were awarded certificates and brightly colored stickers that they wore proudly for the rest of the day.

Page School on the web

The Page School has its own web site. You can find us at: www1.leg.wa.gov/WorkingwithLeg/PageSchool/. This newsletter has been posted there.

Senate calls for taxes to solve budget shortfall

Olympia—Yesterday, the Senate Ways and Means Committee heard testimony from Senators Shelby Massingale, Sebastian Sanchez, Amber Galaz, Logan Stillings, Sara Frias, Brennen Smith and Heath Turner regarding the projected revenue shortfall for the 2009-2011 biennium and the suggested remedies to balance the state operating budget. A majority of senators felt that taxes were the best way to make up lost revenue. Soft drinks, alcoholic beverages, candy and gum and cigarettes were the preferred products slated for taxes. “Soft drinks are very popular drinks. The average American consumes about 526 cans a year. With a 5 cent tax, that would



work out to about an additional \$25 spent on pop in a year. People are not going to stop buying pop for this small additional charge,” said Sen. Smith. Advocating for a \$1 increase in the liquor tax, Sen. Stillings rationalized, “Hard liquor isn’t a necessity; it’s a luxury. People who want to purchase alcohol are not going to balk at an extra dollar.” In addition to bringing in \$59 million to the state, extending the sales tax to candy and gum will not prevent anyone from buying necessary food items needed to survive, according to Sen. Massingale. “There is currently no tax on food items, but candy and gum are not food. Both are low cost items and the increased price will not prohibit people from buying them,” she said. Although the federal government recently increased the tax on cigarettes, the senators felt the need to increase the state tax by 50 cents a pack, as well. Claiming that smokers would not stop purchasing the product because of their addictive behavior, the legislators predicted a \$206 million increase in revenues from this measure. An historically unpopular idea, but one that seemed necessary in our difficult economy was a suggestion by Sen. Turner for a personal income tax on citizens making over \$75,000. “This could bring in \$1.6 billion and would not negatively affect the poor in our state who are just scraping by on the income they make,” he said. Card rooms need to be

taxes, according to Sen. Galaz. “People are already losing money in card rooms, so taxing should be no big deal,” she said. Only two senators advocated cutting corners to help with the budget. Both Sen. Sanchez and Sen. Frias called for cutting spending on goods and services by 25 percent. “Using so much paper is wasteful when most people can use computers more,” said Sen. Frias. “We can save \$200 million by conserving our office supplies and cutting down on janitorial and catering services.” The senators are aware that both citizens and government are going to have to make serious sacrifices in the next two years, if the economy is going to make a turnaround. “Taxes are not the preferred way to make up for lost revenue, but our deficit is just too great and there are too many people who need our help,” said Sen. Massingale.

